



Milwaukee County

*County Executive Chris Abele - Board Chairman Lee Holloway
Supervisor Michael Mayo, Sr., 1st Vice-Chairman*

For Immediate Release

Sept. 15, 2011

Contact: Jeff Bentoff, Office of the County Executive, 414.278.5281

Harold Mester, County Board Public Information Manager, 414.278.4051

County Applies for \$15 Million in Federal Funding For Three New Express Bus Routes

***Plan Would Save Money on Local Routes,
Making Funds Available to Prevent Service Cuts***

MILWAUKEE – Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele, County Board Chairman Lee Holloway and Supervisor Michael Mayo, Sr., announced Thursday that the County is seeking \$15 million in federal funds left over from the now-defunct Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail project to establish three new express bus routes in Milwaukee County.

In addition to shorter travel times for transit riders, express routes would allow the County to reprogram funds from portions of underlying local routes to support other parts of the transit system facing severe potential service cuts.

If approved, the grants would be used to create express bus routes along three existing highly used local route corridors to improve transit travel times.

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grants would cover 80% of the costs of the express routes.

“Transit riders will appreciate the faster service to jobs and other destinations, and we’ll be able to reprogram funds to help keep other service intact,” County Executive Abele said.

“Public transit is the economic thrust of southeastern Wisconsin, and Milwaukee County is committed to providing faster and more efficient service to consumers, Chairman Holloway said. “It is imperative that we pursue this type of creative change.”

Supervisor Mayo, a long-time transit supporter and Chairman of the Board’s Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee, said, “This funding would go a long way toward preventing serious cuts to the transit system and offer riders an exciting and faster service.”

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The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT) awarded the CMAQ funding for the KRM before the state dissolved the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority. WISDOT is seeking proposals for transit projects in Milwaukee, Kenosha and Racine Counties.

The 2011-'13 state budget cuts transit aid to Milwaukee County by 10% (\$6.8 million) in 2012. The Milwaukee County Transit System has proposed a large number of service cuts to offset a total transit budget gap that exceeds \$14 million.

Express buses run on city streets but stop slightly less frequently, shortening trips between destinations. The county has run express routes in the past, but they were discontinued due to lack of funding.

The county's proposed express services would follow existing Routes 27 and 62 and segments of 11 and 15, all routes that are heavily used by workers and students. The transit company intends to continue these local routes in their higher ridership areas.

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